DOI: 10.1111/1467-8675.12338

WILEY Constellations

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

"Identifying with the aggressor": From the authoritarian to neoliberal personality

Samir Gandesha

Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Correspondence
Samir Gandesha, Director, Institute for the Humanities, 3152 Harbour Centre, Simon Fraser University, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 5K3.
Email: gandesha@sfu.ca

1 | INTRODUCTION

Contemporary neoliberal capitalism can be said to be characterized by two significant features. On the one hand, there has been a staggering increase in social and economic inequality since the mid-1970s. For example, since 1977 sixty percent of the increase in US national income has gone to the top ten percent of the population (see Piketty, 2014). Combined with a constellation of forces and tendencies, for example, increasing investment in fixed capital and technical innovation such as intensifying automation, this inequality is only likely to increase in coming years and decades. On the other, in place of a robust, radically democratic challenge to the growth of an inequality so great that it shakes the very foundations of the political order, the rise in support for authoritarian populist political movements throughout Europe and North America proceeds apace. By authoritarian populist movements I mean the movements that purport to embody or represent the will of the people, understood in narrow ethno-national terms, defined in opposition to a power bloc. This was exemplified most dramatically by the breakthrough by the Front National, which came out on top in the first round in the December 2015 regional elections in France—an advance that was halted in the second only by expedient tactical voting by the French Socialists. The USA has witnessed the rise of the so-called alt-right and the election of Donald Trump as president on the basis of an unapologetically racist and profoundly xenophobic agenda that has sought, explicitly, to target Mexican immigration and has proposed a complete ban on Muslims entering the country.

How is it possible to account for this strange and profoundly troubling conjunction of deepening socioeconomic inequality and the growing rise of authoritarian populism and ethno-nationalist extremism? From the militant left, commentators such as Stathis Kouvelakis have argued that neo-fascist political parties are anti-systemic movements that, nonetheless, seek to preserve the existing order of property relations. Kouvelakis argues:

> *Nonetheless, it is precisely this aspect of the FN—its capacity to capture and "hegemonise" a form of popular revolt—that means that any "republican front" strategy, whether a partial or a total one, can only feed it, legitimising its discourse of "us against all the rest" and its self-proclaimed status as the only force opposing "the system"—even "radically" so. (Kouvelakis, 2015).*

According to Kouvelakis, the FN has managed to enjoy this success precisely because they occupy terrain that has been almost entirely vacated by an anti-capitalist left unable to challenge the existing power bloc through a counter-hegemonic project of its own that would pose a legitimate alternative to neoliberal capital in general and austerity in particular.

 © 2018 John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

In contrast, social democrats such as Jürgen Habermas, in his recent writings on the deepening the crisis of Europe, have argued that the crisis is one of political institutions or, to be more precise, a problem can be understood in a lack of political institutionalization: a Euro zone without common foreign and fiscal policies and legal order that could be said to embody the public will of a genuinely post-national constellation. Here it is less a matter of transforming capital as it is a question of bringing the economic and political subsystems under the sway of the symbolically mediated forms of communication embodied in the life-world (Habermas, 2012), although, as we have seen in recent years, the crucial question of whether it is possible to speak of a single European life-world shared by both northern and southern Europe, Germany, and Greece, is unanswered. As Habermas states, "Since 1989–90 it has become impossible to break out of the universe of capitalism; the only remaining option is to civilize or tame the capitalist dynamic from within" (Habermas, 2012, p. 106).

What appears to be lacking in both these accounts of the crisis is the recognition of the need for an explanation of the growth of a palpable susceptibility among subjects to authoritarian rather than radically democratic solutions to the crisis of the capitalist social order that ultimately threatens liberal democracy not from the outside but from within (Adorno, 1998a, p. 90). So: is the crisis simply one of politics and ideology? Is it a crisis simply of failed or incomplete institutionalization? Or is the crisis deeper than this and is it one that has to do with the formation of democratic subjectivity itself? Aside from isolated and sporadic instances, why have citizens not been convincingly mobilized in civil society to transform an order characterized not only by growing inequality but also by the catastrophic environmental destructiveness of a social order that places its own continued, long-term viability in question?

As I have suggested elsewhere (Gandesha, 2003, pp. 1–7), far from including the other in public discourse, authoritarian populist movements have effectively constituted immigrants, blacks, asylum seekers, and refugees as the enemy; as an existential threat to the community's "entire way of life" (Schmitt, 2007) And the manner in which such an enemy is constructed, is through an affectively charged language of disgust (Hurst, 2015) that constitutes the stranger as an uncanny (*Unheimliche*), abject, and, therefore deeply threatening presence that is incapable of the mutuality of discourse, and that must be, therefore, excluded—if necessary, violently—from the body politic. Not unlike the tropes and images through which National Socialist propaganda depicted the Jews, contemporary right-wing populism constitutes the other in dehumanizing terms designed to maximize public disgust and fear: images of disease, bodily wastes, as insects and vermin that threaten to overwhelm and destroy the body politic and can be confronted only by exclusionary policies that occasionally require the suspension of constitutional legality. As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno suggested in the last year of the Second World War, this constitutes the drive to eliminate the non-identical; in the attempt to bring nature under the sway of technical control and mastery, whatever residue of uncontrolled or, indeed, uncontrollable, nature remains elicits an automatic response of revulsion:

> *But anything natural which has not been absorbed into utility by passing through the cleansing channels of conceptual order—the screech of the stylus on slate which sets the teeth on edge, the haut goût which brings to mind filth and corruption, the sweat which appears on the brow of the diligent—whatever is not quite assimilated, or infringes the commands in which the progress of centuries has been sedimented, is felt as intrusive and arouses a compulsive aversion. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, pp. 147–148)*

These developments appear, at least on first glance, to contradict profoundly the justification for the neoliberal reconstitution of contemporary capitalist social relations dating back at least to the mid-1970s. This justification was that the preponderance of market mechanisms would re-orient social relations on sound, which is to say, free and rational foundations, or what Wendy Brown calls the "marketization of democracy" (Brown, 2015). These were understood in terms of rational choices based on individuals' (rather than the "bureaucratic" state's) capacity to make utility-maximizing decisions in the areas of, for example, health care or education. This rationale holds that the conditions of social life will, in fact, be far less encumbered by atavistic allegiances, xenophobic nationalism, racism and sexism. in direct proportion to the preponderance of market rationality as the basis for allocating social goods. The market alone can achieve the kind of smooth equilibrium that always must elude the irrationality of state, management, coordination, and control.

The supposedly enlightening function of neoliberalism at the level of the individual has clearly backfired, not just in Europe and North America but also in the so-called Gujarat model under Narendra Modi on the Indian subcontinent, insofar as it has also unleashed atavistic tendencies. Rather than contributing to the conditions under which agents can exercise their capacity to articulate their own interests autonomously and rationally within the context of a genuine plurality of other such interests, it has led to a seeming surplus of aggression, humiliation and guilt. Belgian psychoanalyst Paul Verhaeghe (2014) has recently remarked that "meritocratic neoliberalism favours certain personality traits and penalizes others." He considers many of these traits to be clinically pathological. Neoliberal capitalism encourages, in his view, superficial articulateness, duplicity, and mendacity, and reckless, risk-taking behavior in place of autonomy, and dependence on ever-shifting norms. Verhaeghe argues that

> *[o]ur society constantly proclaims that anyone can make it if they just try hard enough, all the while reinforcing privilege and putting increasing pressure on its overstretched and exhausted citizens. An increasing number of people fail, feeling humiliated, guilty and ashamed. We are forever told that we are freer to choose the course of our lives than ever before, but the freedom to choose outside the success narrative is limited. Furthermore, those who fail are deemed to be losers or scroungers, taking advantage of our social security system. (2014)*

The proliferation of these psychological traits has arisen in tandem with the growth of authoritarian and exclusionary forms of extreme nationalism and xenophobia. And the combined effect of these developments is profoundly to weaken democratic attitudes, practices, and institutions.

In this article I examine the extent to which it is possible to revisit the concept of the authoritarian personality, as Alan Wolfe (2005), Douglas Kellner (2016), Richard Wolin (2016), Jay Bernstein (2017), and Lars Rensmann (2017) have recently suggested. Adorno and the entire first generation of Critical Theorists can be understood as seeking to provide, through an appropriation of psychoanalysis and a more general cultural critique, an account of a crisis of subjectivity and experience that would constitute a much-needed corrective to materialist theories of the objective crisis of capitalism; theories that pointed towards a radical transformation of capitalism that never, ultimately, came to pass (see Gandesha, 2014a). In the first sentence of *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno describes the non-occurrence of this event in the following way: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed" (Adorno, 2004, p. 3).

Today we are experiencing a return to the original iteration of Critical Theory in the 1920s and 1930s, whereby psychoanalytical drive theory (*Trieblehre*) and concepts such as projective identification and repetition compulsion could be said to be necessitated by the fact that, in the face of evidence that neoliberal policies not only do not work, but have effects that can actually be counterproductive and deeply damaging, which is to say, economically self-undermining, these policies nevertheless continue to be pursued by states with redoubled, reckless fervor with, apart from certain notable exceptions, more or less the full acquiescence of their citizens.[1] Psychoanalysis, therefore, provides us with important means by which we can locate the limits of the still prevailing understanding of a politics premised upon a notion of utility-maximizing rational choice.

Psychoanalysis offers insight into the manner in which persons participate, actively and affectively, through the powerful emotions of love and hate, in reproducing the conditions of their own domination and undermining their own material interests. As a consequence, psychoanalysis can also point in the direction of helping to identify the limits and possibilities of genuine democratic self-determination and will-formation. For the first generation of Critical Theory, authoritarianism was the inverse, negative image of psychoanalysis. It was, as Adorno suggests, "psychoanalysis in reverse". Whereas psychoanalysis aims at achieving an equilibrium between the demands of morality and the rationally justifiable interest of the individual and her desires, authoritarianism authorizes the fulsome expression of libido under certain controlled conditions, and, in particular, aggression against the outsider or the stranger who, for the authoritarian, embodies *Unheimlichkeit* or uncanniness, a term here describing something that is strange yet all-too familiar (see Freud, 1925, p. 15; see also Bernstein, 2017; Phillips, 2014; Zaretsky, 2015, pp. 38–79). This expression of the drives is premised upon an identification with the aggressor.

This idea of identification with the aggressor could be said to underlie the concept of the authoritarian personality, and is what one of the pre-eminent English-language Adorno translators and interpreters, Bob Hullot-Kentor, calls

Adorno's *vade mecum*, or touchstone (Hullot-Kentor, 2006, p. 11). In fact, Adorno's concern with the problem of the identification with the aggressor was, after 1933, an existential problem of how to resist the enormous pressures confronted by any displaced person or refugee to assimilate to their new homeland or place of refuge. Referring both to their own predicament as well as that of those whose fate was far worse, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer argue, with reference to an increasingly totalitarian order:

> *Everything must be used, everything must belong to them. The mere existence of the other is a provocation. Everything else "gets in the way" and must be shown their limits—the limits of limitless horror. No one who seeks shelter shall find it; those who express what everyone craves—peace, homeland, freedom—will be denied it, just as the nomads and traveling players have always been refused rights of domicile. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 150)*

Adorno refers to the connection between this existential reality that he faced in American exile and the development of the arguments of what was to become his book, *Negative Dialectics*. As he says in the lecture presented to the University of Frankfurt on November 11, 1965, in which he discusses the Hegelian claim that the negation of the negation results in positivity:

> *I cannot resist telling you that my eyes were opened to the dubious nature of this concept of positivity only in emigration, where people found themselves under pressure from the society around them and had to adapt to very extreme circumstances. In order to succeed in this process of adaptation, in order to do justice to what they were forced to do, you would hear them say, by way of encouragement—and you could see the effort it cost them to identify with the aggressor—"Yes, so-and-so is really very positive". (Adorno, 2008, p. 17)*

After elaborating on this point, Adorno goes on to say, "For this reason, therefore, we might say, putting it in dialectical terms, that what appears to be positive is essentially the negative, i.e. the thing that is to be criticized" (Adorno, 2008, pp. 18–19). In other words, what appears as positive ultimately harbors the non-identical that it violently assimilates through the act of subsumption. So, in fact, the idea of the identification with the aggressor could be said to lie very much at the heart of Adorno's philosophy, his negative dialectics, as a whole. The ability to engage in the work of critique was itself premised upon the strength of the ego or one's taking on the role of what Hannah Arendt called, following Bernard Lazare, the "conscious pariah" (Arendt, 1996, p. 119).

In what follows, I first discuss some of the central features of the concept of the authoritarian personality and then proceed to outline some of the substantive criticisms of the study itself, as well as some of its underlying psychological and sociological assumptions. If the concept of the authoritarian personality is to be made available to the understanding of the structure of the contemporary, neoliberal, capitalist personality, two key criticisms must, in particular, be addressed.

The first is the study's reliance on the now questionable concept of state capitalism. It may be far from clear that we have, in any straightforward way, entered a period in which the state has simply withdrawn in exact proportion to the extent that unmediated market forces have reasserted themselves. But the claim about the re-emergence or indeed persistence of the authoritarian personality can still be viable, if such a claim is articulated in a way that is sensitive to both the identity and difference of the role of governance in contemporary capitalist societies. Arguably, in the transition from the Keynesian to the neoliberal form of capitalism, the tendency towards authoritarianism grows insofar as there are ever more demands for a heightened "repressive de-sublimation" (Marcuse, 1991, pp. 56–83) combined with greater precariousness and insecurity. There is greater propensity to rely on the exclusionary social bond solidified by a powerful authority figure as the means by which such security can be re-established. The libidinal bond established in the group, as a cathexis of the leader, manifests ambivalence—love of one's own translates, as well, into hatred of the outsider (see Freud, 1925, 1990). Surprisingly, in accounts of neoliberalism, predominantly influenced by Michel Foucault's (2008) work on bio-power and governmentality (see, for example, Wendy Brown's [2015] *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*) there is little or no account of the populist responses, both left and right, to the deepening inequality and insecurity of the neoliberal order.[2]

The second criticism is the study's reliance on a normative Freudian understanding of the process of ego formation through conflict with the father.[3] This, I suggest, can, in part, be addressed by leaning slightly more heavily on heterodox

psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi's original formulation of the idea of the "identification with the aggressor"—which itself entails a constellation of the concepts of identification, introjection and dissociation—and shifts emphasis towards the pre-Oedipal phase of development (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 21) and does not in the process marginalize the role of the mother, as critics have accused Freud of doing. Moreover, Ferenczi suggests that the relation with the authoritarian leader is not merely a libidinal tie but also one of identification that can be seen to be directly at odds with the interests of the followers in the context of a traumatic historical crisis.[4]

If these two criticisms can be convincingly addressed, then perhaps it may be possible to develop the idea of a neoliberal personality, which might, in turn, enable us to sketch a provisional answer to the question I posed at the outset; namely, how may it be possible to reconstruct the concept of the authoritarian personality in the context of a post-Keynesian, neoliberal order? A provisional answer can be given: by dismantling the structures of the Keynesian welfare state, neoliberalism heightens a sense of social insecurity, specifically by creating surplus populations, deepening socioeconomic inequality and threats to cultural identity (see Bauman, 2000). This is a process that Achille Mbembe, in his recent book *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), calls the "Becoming Black of the world" (see West, 2017). By expanding the ambit of negative freedom, largely through the expansion of exchange or market relations, while diminishing the sphere of democratic self-governance or positive freedom, neoliberal policies encourage an identification with, rather than a robust challenge to, an increasingly unequal post-democratic social order.[5] Because neoliberalism has been a global phenomenon since the 1990s, this authoritarian logic can be seen as affecting not just the USA and the UK but as having become a truly global phenomenon.

2 | THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

The concept of the authoritarian personality is to be understood in the context of a constellation of concerns animating the first generation of Critical Theory. Lying at the core of these concerns are the early studies in the 1920s of political attitudes of German workers, Horkheimer's (1982) notion of the "anthropology of the bourgeois epoch,"[6] his 1930s studies with Erich Fromm of authority and the family, Adorno's lectures and public lectures and radio interviews from the mid-1960s and the monumental, though much-impugned, collaborative Berkeley Public Opinion study culminating in the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* itself in 1950.[7]

An essential and hugely influential contribution in this respect was made by Erich Fromm in his book *Escape from Freedom* (1994), in which he sought to integrate social and psychological approaches through a concept of social character. The importance of this work cannot be over-emphasized insofar as it attempted to bring together the work of Marx (social process) and Freud (character), whose underlying assumptions about the relation between the individual and society were, to say the least, not easily reconciled. Fromm argued that social character had to be understood as mediating between the needs and drives of the individual, on the one hand, and social roles, norms, and practices, on the other. Social character represented a patterned response to the contradictory nature of drives and needs and social demands. Fromm's research employed this concept in studying the political attitudes of German workers and concluded that, while they were superficially progressive, their deep, underlying personality structure was profoundly conservative.

If the arguments of *Escape from Freedom* were received by Adorno and some of the other members with no small amount of ambivalence, the concept of the authoritarian personality can be said to be most closely tied to the arguments of the book that Adorno co-authored with Max Horkheimer, and to which I have already referred, that initially took the form of a set of conversations in the early 1940s, transcribed by Gretel Adorno and entitled *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In his talk, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," Adorno states that the "Elements of Anti-Semitism" chapter of this text was determinative for his participation in the collective authorship with Levinson and others of *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, 1998b, p. 230).

Dialectic of Enlightenment (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002) drew upon Adorno's lecture from a decade earlier, entitled "The Idea of Natural History," that sought to reorient and transform the typical understandings of nature and history into, respectively, the space of law-like regularities and the space of the event-like appearance of the new. Rather than embodying a negative philosophy of history that engages in a "totalizing critique of reason," as per Habermas's

interpretation (Habermas 1990, pp. 106–130), the text aims, as Max Pensky has shown, at a de-familiarizing critique, a kind of shock experience of capitalist society as it was entering a historic crisis in the 1930s (Pensky, 2004).

Adorno's concept of natural history grasps nature, at its most natural, as history, and history, at its most historical, as nature. In other words, the history of capitalist social relations was understood in terms of a category drawn from Lukács, that of second nature, an apparently immutable or eternal order based on an unending struggle for existence. And, at the same time, nature was the site of history, that is, of unprecedented events, such as the splitting of the atom. Today, of course, we could include in this idea of nature as the site of the new, the idea of the Anthropocene as the advent of an unprecedented geological epoch resulting from social and historical practices, distinguished by the irreversible and catastrophic human impact on the planetary ecosystem. And between the two, nature and history, there is a close mutually conditioning relation: the seeming absence of alternatives to a naturalized neoliberal capitalist order locks into place an accelerating historical transformation of the natural ecosystem with its mass extinctions and dramatically altered climatic systems which, themselves, produce further positive and ever more dangerously unpredictable feedback loops (see Parenti, 2013).

Here *Aufklärung*, or enlightenment—understood as the deepening reliance on anonymous, impersonal forces while promising, at the same time, to liberate human beings from superstition and mythological forms of thinking, and in the process to promote a form of autonomy—undermines itself. As Horkheimer and Adorno state at the beginning of the first chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment:*

> *Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. (2002, p. 1)*

Aufklärung undermines *Mündigkeit*, the ability to speak for oneself or a condition of rational autonomy, because the mastery and control of nature necessitate social conformism and domination (Adorno & Becker, 1999, pp. 21–34).

The primary argument is that enlightenment is the means by which the species secures its survival, but grossly overshoots its mark and threatens the very life that the machinic ratio of enlightenment seeks to preserve in the first place. While enlightenment doesn't aim simply at the mere preservation of bare life, but rather promises *eudaimonia*, happiness or flourishing, the quotidian existence of the self becomes meaningless and therefore, in this precise sense, de-spiritualized or lifeless. The setting of Beckett's *Endgame*, for example, in a suffocating, claustrophobic bunker outside of which all is "kaput," allegorizes such a life that "doesn't live" ("Das Leben lebt nicht") (see Gandesha, 2016, pp. 110–111).

Lying at the heart of the concept of the authoritarian personality is the problem of the weakness of the ego. The historical roots of the problem are present in Horkheimer's work from the 1930s, the "Studies on Authority and the Family." In those studies, Horkheimer argues that under conditions of liberal capitalism the classical Freudian account of the formation of the sources of rational moral agency—*Mündigkeit*—held sway. As Freud states in Lecture Twenty-one of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, "The Development of Libido," the male child's ego is constituted through the Oedipal struggle with the father over the possession of the mother. The successful negotiation of the Oedipal conflict, for Freud, entails a recognition, on pain of castration, that the mother is off-limits to the child and this moment of recognition represents, at the same time, the internalization of the father's law, which is to say, the formation of conscience or super-ego. Freud states that from the "very intense emotional processes that come into play" at the moment of this "infantile object-choice," that

> *[f]rom this point onwards, the human individual has to devote himself to the great task of detaching himself from his parents, and not until that task is achieved can he cease to be a child and become a member of the social community. (Freud, 1987, p. 380)*

However, where Freud draws conservative inferences, Horkheimer draws more radical ones. That is, the formation of the ego through the Oedipal conflict becomes the basis for the very autonomy that lies at the heart of the possibility of opposition to illegitimate authorities. The Oedipal conflict is itself, as it were, the site of a dialectic of enlightenment—it is the moment of individuation that makes possible a practical transcendence of a reified form of individualism.

With the advent of what Friedrich Pollock called in the 1940s state capitalism (Pollock, 1990, pp. 71–94), we see the emergence of a social formation in which competition between individual firms is supplanted by an administrative state that comes to play a greater coordinating role in managing the tendency towards overproduction and underconsumption. As a result, in Horkheimer's view, the very logic of socialization changes dramatically. The father now is subject to a dramatic diminution of social power, and therefore autonomy, and his authority within the family begins to decline correspondingly. This leads to what Alexander Mitscherlich (1963) called the society without the father. The argument is that, in displacing the *imago* of the father in the family and other social institutions onto an increasingly anonymous system of rational-legal authority, the formation of the rational ego misfires and ends up being circumvented by the prevailing super-ego that establishes its unquestioned authority over the drives. In other words, the individual lacks a secure focal point for identification and therefore orientation.

This, then, becomes the basis for the meta-psychological account which, in *The Authoritarian Personality*, is tested by Adorno and his collaborators via empirical research on the fascist potential in American university students.[8] The relative weakness of the ego in relation to the societal super-ego leads to an excessive form of obedience to external authorities. But for this to be bearable, the authoritarian personality type evinces, as well, a high degree of aggression towards those who are relatively socially powerless. As Hitler himself put it: "Vertanwortung nach oben, Autorität nach unten" ("Responsibility towards those above, authority towards those below") (Adorno, 1990, p. 128). This is why the authoritarian personality is also referred to as the "sadomasochistic" personality—the personality type that is sadistically cruel and potentially violent towards the weak and masochistically self-subordinating vis-à-vis the dominant social order (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1982, p. 116; Rensmann, 2017, pp. 65–144). What the research showed, based on the so-called "F-scale," or "fascist scale," is that authoritarian personalities exhibited a cluster of similar traits and that anti-authoritarian personalities tended to be differentiated and did not share similar traits. The traits shared by the authoritarian personalities included a tendency towards stereotypy, and fear and hatred of difference, associated as it was with weakness, projectivity, submissiveness towards existing authority, weakness of the ego and so forth.

In short, the authoritarian personality was a personality type that took up a cold, harsh attitude towards those who were comparatively powerless and were overly compliant with the demands of the socially dominant. A conclusion drawn from the study is that, because the attitudes towards members of the out-group are irrational, they are not susceptible to reasoned arguments or to the strategy of encouraging sympathy towards these groups. Indeed, this may worsen the problem as it may exacerbate their hidden fear of their own weakness. One cannot overestimate the point that in many of his public lectures and writings Adorno showed himself to be especially preoccupied with the problem of the authoritarian personality.

3 | CRITICISMS

When it was published, *The Authoritarian Personality* was met with two basic criticisms, political and methodological. University of Chicago sociologist Edward Shils criticized it for failing to address the authoritarianism of the left as well as the right; an argument that was first articulated by Hannah Arendt in the *Origins of Totalitarianism*. As Arendt argued, both right and left premised their ideas on a philosophy of history (Arendt, 1973, pp. 305–459). For the right, history was a Darwinian struggle of discrete racial groups for dominance, while for the left, history was the history of class struggle. In other words, there was a worry that the study let far-left groups off the hook. If, however, one looks at Adorno's testy relationship with the students' movement in the 1960s, it becomes clear that he and colleagues such as Habermas were concerned with the phenomenon of "Linksfaschismus" (Gandesha, 2014b, pp. 189–204). And certainly, as Stefan Aust has documented, in the Rote Armee Fraktion's attempt to come to terms with Germany's Nazi past, it reproduced a certain kind of authoritarianism within its own organizational structure (see Aust, 2008).

Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley pointed to various methodological shortcomings with respect to sampling, the wording of certain questions in the questionnaire, questions on causality, lack of verification of self-reporting on the part of the subjects and lack of coherence in the F-scale (Wolfe, 2005). To these criticisms, we may add two more which are, overall, potentially more damaging as they get to the heart of the larger theoretical assumptions upon which the

study is based. The first of these is of the conception of capitalism upon which Horkheimer's early studies on authority and the family are based. The second is of the patriarchal assumptions that underlie the orthodox Freudian metapsychology that informs the concept of the authoritarian personality. The interrelation of these two theses, the transition from liberal to state capitalism (in either totalitarian or Keynesian form) and the changes in socialization and formation of moral agency, is made evident in the "Elements of Anti-Semitism" chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. I am going to skip here the political and methodological criticisms, although noting that today the need to develop a criticism of the authoritarianism of the left as well as the right is particularly pressing.[9]

A further, more severe criticism of *The Authoritarian Personality* is offered by Peter Gordon, who provides a thorough and sophisticated account of the study, and an interesting discussion of Adorno's misgivings about psychoanalysis in general and the study's deployment of social psychology in particular.[10] Gordon argues that

> *The dissolution of the older, psychoanalytic model of the self under the pressure of social standardization thus implied an undialectical fusion between subject and object—between psyche and society—a trend that seemed to confirm Adorno and Horkheimer's broader thesis regarding the rise of an "affirmative" social order in which individual resistance had become virtually impossible. (Gordon, 2017)*

What Gordon tends to overlook is the fact that Adorno roots his account of retrogression in the decline of the bourgeois family itself, in particular, in the eclipse of the *imago* of the father. Gordon relies, moreover, on an unhelpful, somewhat tired characterization of Adorno as a Mandarin Marxist, viewing late capitalism as the totally administered world that has all but liquidated subjectivity (Gordon, 2017). If we take this as a descriptive, factual claim, rather than an exaggeration—in line with Adorno's famous quip about psychoanalysis itself—then how is it possible to square it with the fact that upon returning to Frankfurt in 1949, Adorno tirelessly addressed the public sphere via public lectures, interviews, radio addresses and journalism? Arguably, the most important of these addresses was "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," which is thoroughly imbued with psychoanalytic categories (Adorno, 1998a, pp. 98–104). Another text worthy of mention is a less well-known article simply entitled "Critique," in which he argues that critique institutionalized takes the form of the Montesquieuian division of powers (Adorno, 1998c, pp. 281). This can be read as a direct rejoinder to Carl Schmitt's (2006) theory of sovereignty. Surely this argument of Adorno's rests on the unstated assumption of at least a modicum of ethico-political agency on the part of citizens.

Pollock's idea of state capitalism (1990) conceived of three main departures from the liberal form of capitalism it supersedes:

- Direct controls replace the market.
- Old and new devices are employed to secure the full employment of all resources.
- In its totalitarian form this benefits only certain groups, whereas within democracies it benefits the people as a whole.

It seems deeply questionable that any of these three features of state capitalism obtain today, seeing that

- Market mechanisms have come to replace direct state controls.
- Full employment is no longer a desideratum of public policy (see, for example, Walters, 2000).
- The concept of totalitarianism has, itself, been rendered obsolete in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and it is highly questionable that China could be characterized as totalitarian. Social policies in the West no longer, if they ever did, benefit the people as a whole.

Be this all as it may, it is far from clear that the form of neoliberal capitalism that has supplanted both totalitarian and Keynesian forms of state capitalism can be characterized in an unproblematic way as a replacement of state or political institutions by market mechanisms. While it is not possible to engage in a robust discussion of this difficult question here, it is possible to make a few remarks in this direction. While certain characterizations of neoliberalism, such as

that offered by Pierre Bourdieu (1998), tend to suggest this, the consensus is that neoliberalism does not do away with the state but rather simply alters its role.

So, in David Harvey's influential view, neoliberalism constitutes the return of a particular form of primitive accumulation, or what he calls accumulation by dispossession, which entails four distinct processes: privatization and commodification; financialization; the management and manipulation of crises and state redistribution of wealth upwards (see Harvey, 2005). In his account of neoliberalism, which centers on a detailed analysis of the founding of the 1949 Federal Republic of Germany in the socio-economic policies of "Ordo-liberalism," Michel Foucault's (2008) emphasis is on the manner in which, given their radical discontinuity, state institutions were overtly grounded in the economic logic of the quickly accelerating *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). Significantly, neoliberalism centered on a new mode of governmentality or the conduct of conduct, entailing a redoubled responsibilization of the subject—the subject was now responsible for making herself the center of successful entrepreneurial activity (Foucault 2008, p. 144). Picking up on Harvey's (2005) and Lapavitsas's (2012) emphasis on the growth, expansion, and crisis of financialization in neoliberalism, Maurizio Lazzarato (2012) shows the way in which the state has come to play a key role, particularly after the crash of 2007–2008, as the lender of last resort, which it assumes on behalf of its citizens. The combination of sovereign and growing private debts for university education (in the Anglo-American world) and mortgages, as well as personal consumption, leads to what he calls the "making of indebted man." Through a reading of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Lazzarato suggests that the objective relations of financial debt (Schulden) leads to a subjective condition of guilt (Schuld). This constellation, in his view, has played a key role in profoundly diminishing the possibilities of the kind of social solidarity that would be, itself, capable, of challenging the power of capital. The relation between creditor and debtor that, in his view, has come actually to supplant the capital/wage-labor relation, is, therefore, far more than simply an economic relation but fundamentally, also, a political relation (Lazzarato, 2012, p. 11). Debt is itself, for Lazzarato, a form of governance (see Lazzarato, 2015).

4 | "IDENTIFICATION WITH THE AGGRESSOR"

Along with the presupposition of the totalitarian or Keynesian variants of state capitalism, another weakness in the concept of the authoritarian personality, as I have already suggested, is its reliance on Freudian psychoanalysis to provide a normative account of the development of the ego. There are two aspects of this critique. The first is that the general conception of the self in Freudian psychoanalysis as a monological or closed system. The second is its explicit reliance on the assumption of a strong father figure to ground satisfactory moral development. According to the first line of critique, Jessica Benjamin argues that

> *Within this closed system, the ego invests objects with his desire and takes in these objects to further his autonomy from them. This conception of the individual cannot explain the confrontation with an independent other as a real condition of development and change. It does not comprehend the process of transforming and simultaneously being transformed by the other. (Benjamin, 1988, p. 49)*

It is perhaps for this reason that the general conception of the self in orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis, an understanding of humans as drive-regulating animals, in the words of Stephen Mitchell, has given way to a "more contemporary view of humans as meaning-generating animals" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 23). The reliance on Freud's account of the self, emphasizing the internal integration and organization of the drives in relation to the external requirements of society or civilization, ultimately relies on a Hobbesian account of civilization, as laid out *inter alia* in the speculative anthropology of the primal horde in *Totem and Taboo*, that sits rather uncomfortably with some of the underlying assumptions of Adorno's social philosophy.

More specifically, Jessica Benjamin argues that the concept of the authoritarian personality relies upon the questionable patriarchal assumption that the normative development of the ego can occur only through its confrontation with and internalization of the authority of a strong, autonomous father (Benjamin, 1978, pp. 35–57). She states:

> *Rejecting the alternatives of internalized authority versus seamless conformity, we may still inquire into the impact of this culture upon the character of motherhood and domestic privacy. It is also important to consider the consequences of the possibility that the degendering and depersonalizing of authority allows both members to play the roles formerly restricted to one. (Benjamin, 1978, p. 56)*

If one considers Adorno's immanent critique of Kant's conception of autonomy in *Negative Dialectics*, or his idea of a dependence on an "otherness" that defies subsumption both in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and elsewhere, Adorno's account is, despite his reliance on the Freudian account of ego formation, actually much closer to Jessica Benjamin's inter-subjective account of personality than would appear on first glance. Adorno makes this clear when, in a discussion of the Hegelian concept of *Entäusserung* he states:

> *We become free human beings not by each of us realizing ourselves as individuals, according to the hideous phrase, but rather that we go out of ourselves, enter into relations with others, and in a certain sense relinquish ourselves to them. Only through this process do we determine ourselves as individuals, not by watering ourselves like plants in order to become well-rounded cultivated personalities. (Adorno, 1998b, p. 240)*[11]

This is a rather different picture to that offered by Freud of individuals who are faced with the task of working through their neurotic symptoms by coming to terms with long-repressed wishes from their childhood that return in dreams and parapraxes. It would make sense, therefore, to approach the concept of the authoritarian personality in light of the notion identification with the aggressor in the work of Hungarian analyst Sandor Ferenczi. While Hullot-Kentor attributes the idea to Anna Freud's 1936 *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, the actual source of the notion is Ferenczi, who introduced it in a paper presented to the Twelfth International Psycho-Analytical Congress in Wiesbaden in September 1932, which he then published the following year under the title "Confusion of Tongues between Adults and the Child (The Language of Tenderness and Passion)" (Frankel, 2002, p. 102). By drawing on Ferenczi, it might be possible to avoid some of the philosophical and historical problems associated with Freudian ego-psychology in particular, which, as I have already suggested, understands the individual in terms of a kind of monad or closed system (Adorno's well-watered plant) in which the drives were understood to be integrated as long as the individual successfully adjusted to the prevailing reality principle.

In contrast with Anna Freud's understanding of the term, which suggests an impersonation of the aggressor, and in a sense reflecting back to the aggressor his own aggression, as a way of feeling for that time more secure, Ferenczi's use of the term entails, according to the psychoanalyst Jay Frankel, a "pervasive change in someone's perceptual world … [and] more about actually protecting oneself than about simply feeling more secure" (Frankel, 2002, pp. 102–103).[12] Drawing on his clinical experience with adults who had suffered a deeply traumatic encounter with an abusive adult in early childhood, Ferenczi reasoned that "identification with the aggressor" is a typical response to conditions of pervasive social and emotional insecurity (Ferenczi, 1949, 227). Ferenczi's special understanding of the concept is particlarly attractive for our purposes, insofar as neoliberal capitalism entails, as a central feature, the direct destruction of an entire social security network through what Harvey describes as privatization and commodification, financialization, crisis management, and upward redistribution of wealth (see Harvey, 2005). The combined effect of these four processes of neoliberalization is profoundly traumatic, insofar as they deepen and accelerate the struggle for existence that has always constituted the insecurity that characterizes capitalism at its core. It is a response to a situation in which, to quote Frankel again,

> *we have lost our sense that the world will protect us, when we are in danger with no chance of escape. What we do is make ourselves disappear. This response goes beyond dissociation from present experience: like chameleons, we blend into the world around us, into the very thing that threatens us, in order to protect ourselves. We stop being ourselves and transform ourselves into someone else's image of us. (Frankel, 2002, p. 103)*

There are three dimensions of Ferenczi's account of the identification with the aggressor that distinguishes it from Anna Freud's: rather than a displaced aggression, what we find is compliance, accommodation, and submission. And this works in the following way, as explained by Frankel:

> *First, we mentally subordinate ourselves to the attacker. Second, this subordination lets us* divine *the aggressor's desires—get into the attacker's mind to know just what he is thinking or feeling, so that we can anticipate exactly what he is about to do and know how to maximize our own survival. And, third,* we do *the thing that we feel will save us: usually we make ourselves vanish through submission and a precisely attuned compliance with the attacker. (Frankel, 2002, p. 103)*

In response, far from repudiating or violently repulsing the malevolent adult, the child acquiesces and reflects back to the adult what the latter requires of her. As in the so-called Stockholm syndrome, according to which the hostage comes to identify with or even love his captor, the child identifies with the abusive adult. In addition to the process of *identifying* with the adult as a threatening external object, as an additional mechanism of defense, the child also introjects or transfers from external to internal reality the adult's guilt as a form of mastery of a force that, if it is not mastered, could actually threaten the integrity of the child's ego. By introjecting the adult's guilt, the child effectively assumes the blame for the event. Moreover, the child undergoes a process, particularly at the moment of assault, of splitting and dissociation—a distancing of that part of the child that experienced the violence.

We can understand these three moments in terms of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*'s presentation of the formation of subjectivity that I outlined above. First, faced with a social world marked by a Hobbesian war of all against all, a state of nature that is in fact, the historical reality of capitalism, the individual must strengthen or harden himself in order to be able to compete against others and therefore survive. He must subordinate himself to and therefore identify precisely with the external imperatives of the prevailing performance principle of this order by making himself competitive in relation to other individuals. At the same time, for individuals to do this successfully such an adaptation to the outside must be introjected or internalized. The individual must, therefore, renounce the claim to a fulfilled life. The psychic cost of this dialectic of identification with and introjection of the external forces in the interest of self-preservation is a diminishment in the capacity of the self to experience and ultimately to act. And this entails dissociation. The life that is to be preserved at all costs turns, paradoxically, into a simply getting by; it becomes a kind of living death.

5 | CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

According to his programmatic essay of 1937, Max Horkheimer argues that, as distinguished from traditional theory, "Critical" theory emerges from and self-consciously participates in the "struggle for the future" (Horkheimer, 2002, p. 217). However, the subsequent generations of Critical Theory seem somewhat less confident of making such an intervention. Contemporary Critical Theory, which has since the 1980s taken not only a so-called communicative turn but also a normative one, seems somewhat less than capable of addressing the fundamental problems of our age. Habermas's account of the colonization of the life-world by the social subsystems of economy and state, engendering responses by social movements—in defense of contexts of symbolically meaningful interaction (Habermas, 1987, pp. 332–403)—possesses scant explanatory power in grasping the depth of the global crisis of liberal democracy.[13]

The normative political theory of recognition as developed by Axel Honneth seems even less capable of coming to terms with our contemporary situation because, like so much contemporary liberal political theory, it simply does not have a proper concept of crisis in socioeconomic or political institutions. Unlike Habermas, who has been a public intellectual without peer in the European public sphere since at least his 1953 critique of Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, his Frankfurt successor does not seem disposed to making interventions beyond the seminar room.[14] And, of course, there is nothing necessarily wrong with a withdrawal from public debate and discussion, but why claim the mantle of Critical Theory? The question that inevitably arises is "What's Critical about Critical Theory," as the title of an important article by Nancy Fraser (1985), on Habermas and the question of gender, asks.

Honneth's inability to address crisis has to do with the fact that his conception of the social is indebted more to Durkheim than to Marx; hence in his work there is a displacement of the conception of crisis by social pathology (see Honneth, 2009b). That is to say, Honneth refuses to understand capitalist society as inherently antagonistic but rather sees it as beset by "paradoxes" (Hartman & Honneth, 2006, p. 41). The idea here is that moral and legal norms take time

to catch up with underlying transformations in social relations. Such an unwillingness to address the social in terms of constitutive crises is endemic among liberal intellectuals and academics, and this confirms the right-wing populist suspicion about their detachment from the citizenry as a whole.

Such a lacuna is especially well illustrated by Honneth's lectures on the crucial conception of reification in 2007. Honneth correctly situates his reading of the concept in relation to the dominant understandings of it in the Fichtean Marxism of Georg Lukács and the phenomenological ontology of Martin Heidegger.[15] However, unlike both of his predecessors, who understand the problem of reification in terms of particular sorts of crises—the socioeconomic crisis of capitalism and the ontological crisis of the metaphysical tradition, respectively—for Honneth, following Stanley Cavell, reification seems to amount to a category mistake of failing to ground knowledge in acknowledgment or re-cognition of the other ("Kennen" in "Anerkennen") (Honneth, 2008, pp. 47–52). Such an error can be rectified on an individual level but has no real connection with larger social, economic, and political forces and structures.[16]

In other words, in Honneth's work there seems to be scant awareness of the structural features of capitalist society that create the conditions for reification, such as the manner in which abstract labor is the dominant form of social mediation in this form of society (Postone, 1996, p. 25). Such a form of social mediation would, therefore, be said to contribute, structurally, to the subsumption of persons under the category of thing. Hence only transforming social relations, rather than subjective dispositions, can address the problem of reification. The problem, then, as has been recently stated in a slightly different context, is: how is it possible to make the future of Critical Theory worthy of its past (Kompridis, 2006, p. xi)? One way of doing to is by revisiting its contribution to social psychology as a means of diagnosing the intertwinement of nature and history. What is the difference between Honneth's emphasis on the diagnoses of social pathologies and social psychology which, particularly after Foucault's critique in the first volume of *History of Sexuality* (1990) comes to be regarded as, in its own way, equally normalizing? While a thorough answer to this question cannot be given here, the key difference between Honneth and the first generation of Critical Theory is that the latter held, with Freud, that the inherent conflicts and contradictions in bourgeois civilization could not, ultimately, be satisfactorily reconciled within that order (see Zaretsky, 2015), that the pain exacted by civilization would return as the repressed to threaten it to the very core. As Herbert Marcuse argued in *Eros and Civilization*, eros is perpetually transformed into thanatos, that is to say, the sensuous forces of life are transformed into death and destruction (Marcuse, 1966, pp. 222–237).

A particularly illustrative case of the failure of the normative turn of Critical Theory was revealed in the 2010 midterm US elections, during which time *Guardian* writer Gary Younge interviewed a poor white woman protesting against President Obama's appearance at a campaign event for Democratic incumbent Harry Reid. The woman aggressively, indeed abusively, aired her opposition to the migration of undocumented workers south of the US border. When asked about whether her life had been materially improved by the Obama administration's progressive health care, unemployment insurance and taxation policies, she demurred. When Younge pushed her to respond specifically to the question of whether Obamacare was not a good thing for people in her position, she replied, "To be honest, I've never really been into the whole Obamacare thing, because what is *really* making me ill are all the 'illegals' coming over the border" (Younge, 2010). She expressed her disaffection for the illegals having large families and living off public funds. However, as it turned out, that past year, Nevada had, in fact, experienced a net loss of 50,000 unauthorized immigrants. Such an example, particularly in a context in which health care and immigration reform remain very much on the agenda in the USA, is particularly illustrative of the way in which the authoritarian hostility towards ethnic and sexual difference can have a deleterious impact on rational deliberation and collective will formation. In the case of the poor white woman from Younge's article, one could say, what is undermined is an interest in self-preservation itself, insofar as a lack of medical insurance in the USA is, of course, potentially catastrophic.[17] While this example is hardly in itself evidence for larger social trends, it can be seen as exemplifying the manner in which growing racism and xenophobia renders individuals incapable of achieving the minimal normative thresholds for democratic participation emphasized by subsequent reconstructions of Critical Theory, that is, the inclusion of the other in the context of the unforced force of better argument (see Habermas, 2005), mutual recognition in the contexts of love, right and solidarity (see Honneth, 1996), or liberal tolerance of difference (see Forst, 2016).

I have sought to argue that the some of the meta-psychological weaknesses of the concept of the "authoritarian personality" can, at least in part, be addressed by an account that draws on Sandor Ferenczi's notion of the identification with the aggressor. I have also sought to show the manner in which attention to the transformation of welfare-state capitalism would have to be addressed by a reconstructed conception of neoliberalism. Obviously, the foregoing discussion remains at a very preliminary stage. Be that as it may, can the tripartite structure of identification, introjection and dissociation help us understand the paradox that with deepening inequality and social insecurity we see the emergence not of a strong, radical democratic opposition but, rather, authoritarian parties and movements? In other words, can it help us understand the global rise of right-wing populism?

It may do so in the following way. The ongoing crisis conditions of the neoliberal order combined with a deepening ecological crisis constitute it as radically insecure compared with the one it has replaced, insofar as it comes into being through a roll-back of formal and informal networks of solidarity and social security. It is possible to argue that while it has contributed to the accelerated modernization of the so-called BRIC states (countries as diverse as India, Brazil and China), neoliberal globalization has had, overall, myriad adverse effects. Through an expansion of the sphere of negative market freedoms, the neoliberal order has increased both economic insecurity and cultural anxiety via three features in particular: the creation of surplus people, rising global inequality and threats to identity (see Bauman, 2000, pp. 91–129). At the same time, it has failed to bolster and develop institutions in and through which people could control or determine their own destinies (that is, positive freedom). The result of this is an experience of social insecurity and anxiety and, ultimately, this contributes to the conditions under which certain groups are transformed into objects of fear and loathing. As a result they become defined, via populist discourse, as the political foe or enemy of the people.

The experience of the neoliberal order can, therefore, can be understood as profoundly traumatic.[18] As a way of surviving such shock-like conditions, subjects could be said to identify overwhelmingly—not with those radical democratic forces that constitute a robust challenge to such an order, under conditions of solidarity with others facing similar forms of structural exclusion—but, paradoxically, with the very social forces that maintain and benefit from those structures. They could be said to introject the aggressor's blame for the very conditions of the crisis itself. At the very outset, advocates of neoliberalism, such as the intellectuals of the Mount Pellerin Society, most notably Hayek and Friedman, suggested that unreasonable citizens' demands contributed to the crisis of the Keynesian order and such demands would have to soften if not be renounced if the crisis were to be adequately addressed (see Stedman Jones, 2014).[19] Today, it is in particular the white middle and working classes that have seen their fortunes decline precipitously in the past thirty years, that arguably form the core of support for President Donald J. Trump. And this entails the third aspect of identification with the aggressor, which is to say a dissociation from one's own interests. Can there be any doubt that a Trump presidency would entail—particularly if the Affordable Care Act is repealed or otherwise driven to the brink of collapse—a pronounced deepening of misery for the majority whom globalization has simply left behind? Mimetic identification of the weak with strength appears to be the strategy for survival. The socially excluded can take vicarious pleasure in the bullying posture of a USA that expels Muslims and builds a wall on its southern border with Mexico to keep out the "rapists, murderers and drug dealers;" the proverbial "garbage" of Mexican society (*Washington Post*, 2015).

So, the neoliberal order with which individuals identify—which is ever more abstract and anonymous in nature—does not present itself as such. Rather it concretizes itself as a strong ethnic or national or perhaps even racial body, often manifested in the figure of a strong, decisive leader, a leader that constitutes itself in a force field against an alien enemy, against which it purports to defend the marginalized and the excluded—and not just against such aliens, but also against an increasingly venal political class which necessitates the demand to "drain the swamp." In fact, as Postone has argued in his sharp analysis of anti-Semitism, the latter phenomenon represents, in a displaced, one-sided and reified form, a critique of capitalism insofar as its abstract features themselves lay at the stereotypical representation of the figure of the Jew. As Postone argues:

> *The Jews were rootless, international, and abstract.…Modern anti-Semitism, then, is a particularly pernicious fetish form. Its power and danger result from its comprehensive worldview which explains and gives form to certain modes of anti-capitalist discontent in a manner that leaves capitalism intact, by attacking the personifications of that social form. (Postone, 1986, p. 313)*

Today, it could be argued, new groups have come to occupy a place alongside that of the Jews. In the rhetoric of our contemporary "Prophet of Deceit" (Wolin, 2016), Donald J. Trump, as I suggested above, the figure of the Jew is accompanied by the Muslim and the Mexican, indeed, the migrant, who seems equally "rootless, international and abstract." The constitution of neoliberal subjectivity entails making each individual increasingly responsible for her own success or failure. One of the most cutting epithets served up by Trump is "loser." And this, of course, could be said to increase pressure on Trump's supporters to lay the blame for their own success or failure on the presence of members of an outsider or alien group. What is ailing the USA then is not deepening social and economic inequality combined with declining capital investment in enterprise and public investment in infrastructure and schools. Rather, it has to do with weakness, a lack of resolve and decision, the index of which is the porosity of borders and the movement of peoples through them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article was presented at both the "Der aufrechte Gang im Windschiefen Kapitalismus Tagung" at the Nietzsche Kolleg and at the Freud Museum in London in January 2016. I wish to thank Dan Adleman, Johan Hartle, Hilda Fernandez, Christopher Fortune, Jay Frankel, Christoph Henning, Lene Auestad, Max Pensky, Henry Pickford, Lucia Pradella, Lars Rensmann, Jason King, Jonathan Sklar, and three anonymous reviewers for their comments on previous iterations.

NOTES

[1] For example, one year after the OECD (2014) produced a report clearly outlining potentially disastrous deflationary effects, as in the case of Japan of neoliberal policies, there is little evidence of any of its member countries having substantially altered course or planning to do so in the foreseeable future. Of course, the recent ascension to Labour Party leader in the UK of Jeremy Corbyn, as well as the challenge offered by Bernie Sanders to Hilary Clinton's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination is something of a countervailing tendency insofar as they both, in their own ways, draw upon a high level of grassroots organizing.

[2] Although Brown (2017) does try to address what she calls apocalyptic populism in a recent talk published in *Eurozine*.

[3] In "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," for example, Adorno cites Horkheimer's "Authoritarianism and the Family Today" (1990, pp. 128).

[4] Ferenczi's role in Adorno's thought is especially interesting insofar as the Hungarian analyst reflects on the possibility of the elimination of the super-ego, which Adorno addresses approvingly in *Negative Dialectics* (2004) in the context of his assessment of Kant's second critique.

[5] Here I follow Erich Fromm's analysis of primary and secondary bonds and the connection he makes to these two distinct forms of freedom (Fromm, 1994, pp. 103–134).

[6] Max Horkheimer (1982, pp. 10–60). Until John Abromeit's extensive discussion of this text in his magisterial intellectual biography of Horkheimer (2011), this important contribution was widely overlooked.

[7] It is worth noting that in the same year, Donald Winnicott (1986, pp. 239–259) delivered a talk that poses a question of the relationship between individual psychological and political maturity that parallels in interesting ways that of Adorno and his colleagues.

[8] Similar studies, with similar results, were produced in the *Bundesrepublik*. I am grateful to Henry Pickford who reminded me of this point.

[9] By this I mean the rise and consolidation of "identity politics" that explicitly or implicitly holds that the fundamental problem of contemporary societies is racism and sexism, defined by a lack of adequate representation of people of color and women (as well as other marginalized groups such as people who are disabled, trans-people, etc.) without a larger account of the structures that give rise to such lack of representation and what to do about changing them. Often identity politics is accompanied by the radically particularistic claim that if you do not possess the experience of X or Y group you cannot understand the force of their normative claims. In other words, identity politics can often have the effect of closing down discussion and dialogue.

[10] Indeed, as we have just seen, Adorno and his colleagues have a psychoanalytical account of the diminution of the capacity for reflection and judgment.

[11] The similarities with the Lacanian account of the unconscious, not as the deep structure of the mind but rather as existing in a condition of "extimacy," that is, in the world through desire for desire, is unmistakable. I am indebted to the Lacanian psychoanalyst Hilda Fernandez for this insight.

[12] The following discussion of the significance of Ferenczi's work draws upon my contribution to a Roundtable discussion of the Frankfurt School and the New Right in *Logos*, 16 (Gandesha, 2017).

[13] This has been exemplified by both the election of Donald J. Trump as the 45th President of the USA and the victory of the Leave Campaign, leading to the historic exit of Britain (Brexit) from the EU.

[14] Although Honneth's confrontation with Peter Sloterdijk over the latter's contrarian advocacy of neoliberal tax policy, for example, was certainly necessary and laudable (see Honneth, 2009a).

[15] According to Lucien Goldmann (1977, pp. 1–24), the latter constituted a reply to the former.

[16] This is consistent with a claim he once made at a conference that when Starbucks began calling its employees associates this amounted to a substantive gain in recognition.

[17] It has been estimated that were Congress to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), something like 23 million Americans would lose their health care insurance and as a result, a significant proportion of that number would be placed in grave danger. A Harvard study showed that those without health insurance, after accounting for differences in age, sex, ethnicity, etc., had a 40 percent greater chance of dying than those with health insurance (see Chalabi, 2017).

[18] Since Margaret's Thatcher's infamous remark about the "short, sharp, shock," it is often referred to as a kind of "shock therapy." See also Klein (2008, pp. 56–84).

[19] From Chile, in which the coup against Allende constituted the first neoliberal laboratory, to Ronald Regan's attack on the air traffic controllers, to Thatcher's attack on the miners.

REFERENCES

Abromeit, J. (2011). *Max Horkheimer and the foundations of the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1990). Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda. In E. Gebhardt and A. Arato (Eds.), *The essential Frankfurt School reader* (pp. 118–137). New York: Continuum Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1998a). The meaning of working through the past. In *Critical models: Interventions and catchwords* (pp. 89–103) H. Pickford (Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1998b). Scientific experiences of a European scholar in America. In *Critical models: Interventions and catchwords* (pp. 215–242) H. Pickford (Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (1998c). "Critique" In *Critical models: Interventions and catchwords* (pp 281–88) H. Pickford (Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (2004). *Negative dialectics*, E. B. Ashton (Trans.). London: Taylor & Francis.

Adorno, T. W. (2006). The idea of natural history. In R. Hullot-Kentor, *Things beyond resemblance: Collected essays on Theodor W. Adorno* (pp. 252–269). New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, T. W. (2008). *Lectures on negative dialectics: Fragments of a lecture course 1965/66*, R. Livingstone (Transl.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Adorno, T. W., & Becker, H. (1999). Education for maturity and responsibility. *History of the Human Sciences*, *12*, 21–34.

Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D. J., & Sanford, R. N. (1982). *The authoritarian personality: Studies in prejudice*, M. Horkheimer and S. H. Flowerman (Eds.). New York: Norton.

Arendt, H. (1973). *The origins of totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt.

Arendt, H. (1996). We refugees. In *Altogether elsewhere: writers on exile* (pp. 110–119) M. Robinson (Ed.). New York: Faber and Faber.

Aust, S. (2008). *The Baader Meinhof Complex*. London: Bodley Head.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Benjamin, J. (1978). Authority and the family revisited: Or, a world without fathers? *New German Critique*, *13*, 35–57.

Benjamin, J. (1988). *The bonds of love: psychoanalysis, Feminism and the problem of domination*. New York: Pantheon Press.

Bernstein, J. (2017). Adorno's uncanny analysis of Trump's authoritarian personality. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://www.publicseminar.org/2017/10/adornos-uncanny-analysis-of-trumps-authoritarian-personality/#.WfeuqUzMz_Q.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). The utopia of endless exploitation: The essence of neoliberalism. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu.

Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Brown, W. (2017). Apocalyptic populism. *Eurozine*, 20 August. Retrieved October 15, 2017 from http://www.eurozine.com/apocalyptic-populism.

Chalabi, M. (2017). Will losing health insurance mean more US deaths? Experts say yes. *Guardian*, 24 June. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/24/us-healthcare-republican-bill-no-coverage-death.

Frankel, J. (2002). Exploring Ferenczi's concept of identification with the aggressor: Its role in trauma, everyday life, and the therapeutic relationship. *Psychoanalytical Dialogues*, *12*, 101–139.

Fraser, N. (1985). What's critical about critical theory. *New German Critique*, *35*, 97–131.

Ferenczi, S. (1949). Confusion of tongues between adults and the child (the language of tenderness and of passion). *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, *30*, 225–230.

Forst, R. (2016). *Toleration in conflict: Past and present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, M. (2008). *Birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978–79*. Graham Burchell (Transl.). New York: Picador.

Foucault, M. (1990). *History of sexuality volume I: Introduction*. New York: Vintage.

Freud, S. (1925). The uncanny. In *The standard edition of the complete writings of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 17 (1917–1919) (pp. 218–253), J. Strachey, (Transl.). London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

Freud, S. (1987). *Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*, Transl. J. Strachey. London: Penguin.

Freud, S. (1990). *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*. New York: Norton.

Fromm, E. (1994). *Escape from freedom*. New York: Holt.

Gandesha, S. (2003). The political semiosis of populism. *Semiotic Review of Books*, *13*, 1–7.

Gandesha, S. (2014a). The Frankfurt School. In M. Gibbon (Ed.). *Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of political thought* (pp. 1–6). Oxford: Blackwell.

Gandesha, S. (2014b). The color of Adorno's thought: On Hito Steyerl's *Adorno's Grey*. In S. Giachetti (Ed.) *Critical theory and the challenge of praxis* (pp. 189–204). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Gandesha, S. (2016). In sympathy with the ephemeral life: Adorno's reading of Beckett's *Endgame*. *Discipline Filosofiche* 26, Theodor W. Adorno: *Truth and dialectical experience*, Eds. G. Matteccui and S. Marino: 99–124.

Gandesha, S. (2017). The neo-liberal personality. *Logos*, *16*. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://logosjournal.com/2017/the-neoliberal-personality/.

Goldmann, L. (1977). *Lukács and Heidegger: Towards a new philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Gordon, P. E. (2017). The authoritarian personality revisited: Reading Adorno in the age of Trump. *boundary 2*, *44*, 31–56.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action, volume two: Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason*. T. McCarthy (Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Books.

Habermas, J. (1990). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures*. F. Lawrence (Transl.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2005). *The inclusion of the other: Studies in political theory*. C. Cronin and P. de Greiff (Eds.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (2012). *The crisis of the European Union: A response*. Ciaran Cronin (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Books.

Hartman, M., & Honneth, A. (2006). Paradoxes of capitalism. *Constellations*, *13*, 41–58.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neo-liberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Honneth, A. (1996). *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts*. J. Anderson (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Honneth, A. (2008). *Reification: A new look at an old idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Honneth, A. (2009a). *Fataler Tiefsinn aus Karlsruhe*. *Die Zeit*, 24 September. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://www.zeit.de/2009/40/Sloterdijk-Blasen?page=1.

Honneth, A. (2009b). *Pathologies of reason: On the legacy of critical theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Horkheimer, M. (1982). Egoism and the freedom movement: On the anthropology of the bourgeois epoch. *Telos*, *54*, 10–60.

Horkheimer, M. (2002). Traditional and critical theory. In *Critical theory: Selected essays* (pp. 188–243). New York: Continuum Press.

Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (2002). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. E. Jephcott (Transl.). Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hullot-Kentor, R. (2006). *Things beyond resemblance: Collected essays on Theodor W. Adorno*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hurst, A. (2015). Donald Trump and the politics of disgust. *The New Republic*. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from https://newrepublic.com/article/126837/donald-trump-politics-disgust.

Kellner, D. (2016). Donald Trump as authoritarian populism: A Frommian analysis. *Logos*, *16*. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://logosjournal.com/2016/kellner-2/.

Klein, N. (2008). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Toronto: Vintage.

Kompridis, N. (2006). *Critique and disclosure: Critical theory between past and future*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kouvelakis, S. (2015). The French disaster. Stathis Kouvelakis on the Front National and disintegration of the Left. Verso blog. Retrieved December 31, 2015 from http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2399-the-french-disaster-stathis-kouvelakis-on-the-front-national-and-disintegration-of-the-left.

Lapavitsas, C. (2012). *Financialization in crisis*. London: Brill.

Lazzarato, M. (2012). *Making of indebted man: An essay on the neo-liberal condition*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).

Lazzarato, M. (2015). *Governing by debt*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e).

Marcuse, H. (1966). *Eros and civilization: A philosophical inquiry into Freud*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Marcuse, H. (1991). *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Mbembe, A. (2017). *Critique of black reason*. L. Dubois (Transl.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mitchell, S. A. (1993). *Hope and dread in psychoanalysis*. New York: Basic Books.

Mitchell, S. A., & Black, M. J. (1995). *Freud and beyond*. New York: Basic Books.

Mitscherlich, A. (1963). *Society without the father: A contribution to social psychology*. E. Mosbacher (Trans.). New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

OECD. (2014). *Economic outlook*, November. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from http://Management/oecd/economics/oecd-economic-outlook-volume-2014-issue-1_eco_outlook-v2014-1-en#page1.

Parenti, C. (2013). A radical approach to the climate crisis. *Dissent*. Retrieved 15 October 15, 2017 from https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/a-radical-approach-to-the-climate-crisis.

Pensky, M. (2004). Natural history: The life and afterlife of a concept in Adorno. *Critical Horizons*, *5*, 227–258.

Phillips, A. (2014). *Becoming Freud: The making of a psychoanalyst*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Pollock, F. (1990). State capitalism: Its possibilities and limitations. In *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (pp. 71–94). E. Gebhardt and A. Arato (Eds.) New York: Continuum Press.

Postone, M. (1986). Anti-Semitism and national socialism. In *Germans and Jews Since the Holocaust* (pp. 302–314). A. Rabinbach and J. Zipes (Eds.). New York: Holmes and Meier.

Postone, M. (1996). *Time, labour and social domination: A reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rensmann, L. (2017). *The politics of unreason: The Frankfurt School and the origins of modern antisemitism*. Buffalo, NY: SUNY.

Schmitt, C. (2006). *Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Schmitt, C. (2007). *The concept of the political*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Stedman Jones, D. (2014). *Masters of the universe: Hayek, Friedman and the birth of neoliberal politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verhaeghe, P. (2014). Neo-liberalism has brought out the worst in us. *Guardian*, September 29. Retrieved January 1, 2016 from http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/29/neoliberalism-economic-system-ethics-personality-psychopathicsthic.

Walters, W. (2000). *Unemployment and government: Genealogies of the social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Washington Post. (2015). Trump announces a presidential bid. *Washington Post*, 16 June. Retrieved October 15, 2017 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/06/16/full-text-donald-trump-announces-a-presidential-bid/?utm_term=.16e3f02fa2c1.

West, A. N. (2017). Review of Achille Mbembe's *Critique of black reason*. *boundary 2*. Retrieved October 15, 2017 from https://www.boundary2.org/2017/08/adrian-nathan-west-a-review-of-achille-mbembes-critique-of-black-reason.

Winnicott, D. W. (1986). Some thoughts on the meaning of the word "democracy." In *Home is where we start from: Essays by a psychoanalyst* (pp. 239–259). London: Penguin.

Wolfe, A. (2005). The authoritarian personality revisited. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 October. Retrieved October 15, 2017 from http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Authoritarian/5104.

Wolin, R. (2016). Our prophet of deceit. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30 October. Retrieved October 15, 2017 from http://www.chronicle.com/article/Our-Prophet-of-Deceit/238176.

Younge, G. (2010). America's great divide. *The Guardian*, 29 October. Retrieved January 2, 2016 from http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2010/oct/29/younge-america-great-divide.

Zaretsky, E. (2015). *Political Freud: A history*. New York: Columbia University Press.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Samir Gandesha is an Associate Professor in the Department of the Humanities and the Director of the Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University. He specializes in modern European thought and culture, with a particular emphasis on the 19th and 20th centuries. Most important publications: *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations* (ed. with Lars Rensmann, Palo Alto 2012), *The Spell of Capital: Reification and Spectacle* (ed. with Johan Hartle, Amsterdam 2017), and *Aesthetic Marx* (ed. with Johan Hartle, London 2017).

How to cite this article: Gandesha S. "Identifying with the aggressor": From the authoritarian to neoliberal personality. *Constellations*. 2018;1-18. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12338